

Message Text

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21

ACTION IO-10

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5887

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

COMICEDEFOR

CINCLANT

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

USUN NEW YORK 0453

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 1486

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS PFOR IC UK UNSC

SBUJECT: ICELAND-UK FISHERIES DISPUTE: LOW-KEY REACTION TO UNSC
DISCUSSION

1. LOCAL PRESS TREATMENT OF ICELAND'S UN SECURITY COUNCIL COMPLAINT
AGAINST UK OVER FISHERIES DISPUTE INCIDENT HAS BEEN PROMINENT BUT
SUBDUED. THERE HAVE BEEN NO EDITORIAL COMMENTS NOR PUBLIC STATEMENTS
BY POLITICAL LEADERS.

2. MOST DECEMBER 17 MORNING PAPERS HAD FRONT-PAGE ITEMS ON
SUBJECT, BUT ONLY INDEPENDENCE PARTY'S MORGUNBLADID, WITH OWN
PRINTING FACILITY AND LATER DEADLINE, CARRIED FULL ACCOUNT OF
BOTH ICELANDIC AND UK PRESENTATIONS. MORGUNBLADID HEADLINED
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ARTICLE WITH PERMREP INGVARSSON'S CHARGE OF "BRITISH AGGRESSION,"

BUT WAS OTHERWISE STRAIGHT-FORWARD. BOTH AFTERNOON PAPERS, WHICH RUN HEAVILY TO LOCAL NEWS AND FEATURES, PROVIDED ONLY BRIEF COVERAGE OF SECURITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION.

3. MORGUNBLADID AND PROGRESSIVE PARTY'S TIMINN FEATURED YESTERDAY'S PRESS CONFERENCE BY INGVARSSON IN THIS MORNING'S EDITIONS. TIMINN ALSO CARRIED TEXT OF INGVARSSON STATEMENT TO SC ON TUESDAY. OPPOSITION PAPERS IGNORED STORY TODAY.

4. MFA SEC GEN PETUR THORSTEINSSON OFFERED ONLY OFFICIAL REACTION THUS FAR IN BRIEF INTERVIEW YESTERDAY. THORSTEINSSON SAID GOI HAD ACCOMPLISHED ITS AIM BY PRESENTING CASE TO SC. " NO DECISION BY THE COUNCIL WAS CONTEMPLATED," HE SAID. "THE INTENTION WAS TO GENERATE WORLD ATTENTION IN THE MATTER. THIS WAS DONE..."

5. GENERALLY OBJECTIVE COVERAGE OF SECURITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION-- WHICH HAD BEEN BILLED HERE AS MAJOR, UNPRECEDENTED EVENT--AND LACK OF EDITORIAL COMMENT, CONTRASTS WITH HIGHLY EMOTIONAL TREATMENT BY PRESS OF OTHER ASPECTS OF DISPUTE THUS FAR. OF COURSE, HANDLING BY ICELANDIC PRESS OF ANY TOPIC IS DETERMINED WITH AT LEAST ONE EYE ON DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS, AND INCONCLUSIVE SC DELIBERATIONS MAY BE HARD TO COME TO GRIPS WITH IN THIS CONTEXT. THUS, AS SOMETIMES HAPPENS IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION PAPERS RESPECTIVELY MAY BE WAITING FOR EACH OTHERS' ANALYSIS BEFORE COUNTERATTACKING.
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